

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 171745Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 714
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
AMCONSUL TURIN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: ARE THE COMMUNISTS DROPPING THE IDEA OF THE HISTORIC
COMPROMISE

SUMMARY. THE ABSENCE OF THE USE OF THE TERM QUOTE HISTORIC
COMPROMISE END QUOTE FROM THE CURRENT VOCABULARY OF THE ITALIAN
COMMUNIST PARTY'S (PCI) LEADERSHIP HAS LED SOME
OBSERVERS TO SUGGEST THAT PARTY MIGHT BE RETHINKING ITS LONG-
TERM STRATEGY. ONE OF THE MORE PROVOCATIVE ARTICLES ON THE
SUBJECT APPEARED IN CORRIERE DELLA SERA ON FEBRUARY 15
WRITTEN BY THE NEWSPAPER'S ROME BRUEAU CHEIF. WE CONCUR WITH
HIS FINDINGS THAT IT IS TOO SOON TO DRAW ANY DEFINITE
CONCLUSIONS, THUS FAR THERE IS NO SERIOUS EVIDENCE
THAT THE PCI IS MOVING TO DROP THE STRATEGY OF THE HISTORIC
COMPROMISE FROM ITS IDEAOLOGICAL BAGGAGE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE
SOME SIGNED OF A DEBATE DEVELOPING ON THE TYPE OF TACTICS WHICH
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WOULD MOST USEFULLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE EVENTUAL SUCCESS OF THE
STRATEGY. AS THE PARTY BEGINS TO THINK OF ITS
NEXT CONGRESS TO BE HELD IN APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR, IT CAN BE
ASSUMED THAT AT LEAST SOME DEBATE ABOUT TACTICS AND EVEN
STRATEGY MUST BE GOING ON BEHIND CLOSED DOORS. END SUMMARY.

1. SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS ARE STARTING TO COMMENT ON THE

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE TERM QUOTE HISTORIC COMPROMISE END QOUTE FROM THE VOCABULARY OF THE PCI LEADERSHIP. IN THE VIEW OF SOME COMMENTATORS, THIS DEVELOPMENT SIGNALS THE BEGINNING OF AN EFFORT BY THE PCI TO RETHINK ITS LONG-TERM STRATEGY. OTHERS SUGGEST THAT IT REFLECTS THE EARLY STAGES OF A DEBATE NOT ON THE STRATEGY BUT ON THE TACTICS NEEDED TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE STRATEGY.

2. THE MOST PROVOCATIVE ARTICLE WE HAVE SEEN ON THIS SUBJECT APPEARED IN THE FEBRUARY 15 ISSUE OF THE MILAN DAILY CORRIERE DELLA SERA AND WAS WRITTEN BY THE NEWSPAPER'S ROME BUREAU CHIEF GAETANO SCARDOCCHIA. (WE ARE AWARE THAT SCARDOCCHIA HAS GOOD CONTACTS AT HIGH LEVELS IN THE PCI INNER CIRCLE, INCLUDING OCCASIONAL OFF-THE-RECORD MEETINGS WITH PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER.) WHILE NOTING THAT SOME PEOPLE ARE SAYING THAT THE PCI HAS REPUDIATED THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE AS A FIRST STEP IN MOVING TO A LEFT ALTERNATIVE STRATEGY, SCARDOCCHIA SUGGESTS THAT FROM THE SPEECHES AND ACTIONS OF PARTY LEADERS IT IS TOO SOON TO DRAW THIS CONCLUSION. HOWEVER, HE NOTES THAT AT THE JANUARY CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION SOME CRACKS IN THE TRADITIONAL PCI POSITION DID SEEM TO APPEAR. THESE WERE THE HYPOTHESES BERLINGHER FLOATED OF A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC), BERLINGUER'S REFERENCE TO THE DESIRABILITY OF THE ALTERNATING OF POWER IN NORMAL TIMES, AND THE VERY FACT THAT BERLINGUER DID NOT ONCE HIMSELF, IN ONE OF HIS MOST IMPORTANT SPEECHES IN MONTHS, TALK DIRECTLY ABOUT THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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3. SCARDOCCHIA OBSERVES THAT AT PCI HEADQUARTERS ONE IS ASSURED THAT VIRTUALLY NOTHING HAS CHANGED. INFORMED SOURCES EXPLAIN THAT THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE HAS DISAPPEARED FROM THE PCI LEXICON BECAUSE IT DOES NOT APPEAL TO SOME (AS SEEN FROM PARTY PRESIDENT LONGO'S DECEMBER 30, 1977, INTERVIEW IN CORRIERE DELLA SERA) OR BECAUSE IT LEADS TO NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES, OR THEY ASSERT THAT TO REPUDIATE THE WORD DOES NOT REPRESENT A REPUDIATION OF THE CONCEPT. PEOPLE WHO USE THE LAST ARGUMENT POINT TO THE FACT THAT WHEN PARTY LEADERS TALK OF GOVERNMENTS OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, OR OF DEMOCRATIC SOLIDARITY OR OF UNITARY RELATIONSHIPS, THEY REALLY ARE FINDING NEW WAYS TO EXPRESS AN OLD CONCEPT. PURSUING HIS ANALYSIS, SCARDOCCHIA SUGGESTS THAT WHAT IS REALLY OCCURRING IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DEBATE OVER TACTICS WITH THE CENTRAL THEME OF THE DISSENTERS BEING THAT THE PCI LEADERSHIP HAS ACTED TOO DIPLOMATICALLY AND RENOUNCED AGGRESSIVE POLICIES IN SEEKING TO MOVE THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS FORWARD TOWARDS THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. CONCLUDING HIS ARTICLE, SCARDOCCHIA THEORIZES THAT THERE IS NOW EMERGING A GROUP WITHIN THE PCI HIERARCHY WHICH WOULD LIKE A MORE ENERGETIC LEADERSHIP AND WHICH LOOKS TO CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES

PRESIDENT PIETRO INGRAO RATHER THAN TO PARTY SECRETARY
BERLINGUER FOR ITS SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION.

4. COMMENT. WE CONCUR THAT IT IS FAR TOO SOON TO WRITE THE
OBITUARY FOR THE STRATEGY OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE. FROM THE
INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL, WE SEE NO SERIOUS
EVIDENCE THAT THE PCI IS MOVING TO DROP THE STRATEGY OF THE
HISTORIC COMPROMISE FROM ITS IDEOLOGICAL BAGGAGE. AT THIS
STAGE IN ITALIAN POLITICAL HISTORY, THE STRATEGY OF THE
HISTORIC COMPROMISE, REGARDLESS OF THE WORDS USED TO DEFINE
IT, STILL WOULD SEEM TO SERVE THE OVERALL PURPOSES OF THE PCI
LEADERSHIP WHICH IS SEEKING TO ATTRACT VOTERS WHO HITHERTO
HAVE NOT SUPPORTED THE COMMUNISTS. HOWEVER, AS THE PARTY
EXPERIENCES DIFFICULTIES WITH ITS TRADITIONAL BASE, THERE ARE
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BOUND TO BE INDIVIDUALS WHO BEGIN TO QUESTION THE TACTICS
EMPLOYED TO IMPLEMENT THE PARTY'S OVERALL STRATEGY AND TO TALK
ABOUT A MORE AGGRESSIVE APPROACH TO THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE
IN WHICH THE PARTY IS ENGAGED. ON. INGRAO, WHO HAS LONG HELD
THAT THE STRATEGY OF THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE IS A LONG-
TERM PROCESS LARGELY BECAUSE OF THE CONSERVATIVE NATURE
OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY, AND WHO WAS AN EARLY RIVAL
OF BERLINGUER FOR THE SUCCESSION TO LUIGI LONGO, IS A LOGICAL
CANDIDATE TO LEAD THE DOUBTERS. THE DECIDEDLY MORE AGGRESSIVE
APPROACH THAT PARTY SECRETARY BERLINGUER HAS BEEN TAKING IN
RECENT WEEKS COULD WELL BE AN ATTEMPT TO COVER HIS FLANK ON
THE LEFT AND TO MINIMIZE THE POSSIBILITY, WHICH WE NOW
CONSIDER REMOTE, OF A SERIOUS CHALLENGE TO HIS POSITION FROM INGRAO
OR SOMEONE OF HIS BRAND. IN ANY EVENT, AS THE PARTY BEGINS
TO PLAN BOTH IDEOLOGICALLY AND ADMINISTRATIVELY FOR ITS NEXT
CONGRESS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN APPROXIMATELY ONE YEAR, IT
CAN BE ASSUMED THAT MUCH SERIOUS DEBATE ON TACTICS AND EVEN
SOME ON LONG-TERM STRATEGY MUST BE DEVELOPING BEHIND THE
PARTY'S CLOSED DOORS. GARDNER

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